

We claim:

1. A backup and retrieval system for a network computing system, the network computing system comprising a plurality of groups of network devices storing data, the backup and retrieval system comprising:
 - a plurality of backup cells comprising:
 - a backup device executing a backup of the data stored on at least one of the plurality of groups of network devices;
 - a management component, communicatively coupled to the at least one backup device, controlling the backup of the data to the backup device; and
 - each of the plurality of backup cells communicatively coupled to at least one other of the plurality of backup cells, and each of the plurality of backup cells adaptable to be controlled by a management component in another of the plurality of backup cells.
2. The backup and retrieval system of claim 1, wherein the backup device is controllable from the management component in another of the plurality of backup cells.
3. The backup and retrieval system of claim 1, wherein the backup device is controllable from the management component in another of the plurality of backup cells via the management component in the same backup cell as the backup device.

4. A backup and retrieval system for a network computing system, the network computing system comprising a first group of network devices storing data, the backup and retrieval system comprising:

a first backup cell comprising:

at least one backup device executing a backup of the data stored on the first group of network devices;

a first manager component, communicatively coupled to the at least one backup device, controlling the backup of the data to the at least one backup device;

a second backup cell communicatively coupled to the first backup cell, the second backup cell comprising:

a second manager component; and

the second manager component controlling the backup of the data to the at least one backup device.

5. The backup and retrieval system of claim 4 wherein the second manager component directly controls the backup of data to the at least one backup device.

6. The backup and retrieval system of claim 4 wherein the second manager component directly controls the backup of data to the at least one backup device via the first manager component.

7. The backup and retrieval system of claim 4, the network computing system comprising a first network device, wherein the first manager component is a software

module executing on the first network device, and the second manager component is a software module.

8. The backup and retrieval system of claim 7, the network computing system further comprising a second network device, wherein the second manager component executes on the second network device.

9. The backup and retrieval system of claim 7 wherein the second manager component executes on the first network device.

10. A backup and retrieval system for a network computing system, the network computing system comprising a first group of network devices containing data, the network computing system further comprising a first network device, the backup and retrieval system comprising:

at least one backup device executing backup functions for the data contained on the first group of network devices;

a first management component executing on the first network device, communicatively coupled to the at least one backup device, controlling the backup of the data to the at least one backup device; and

a second manager component, communicatively coupled to the first network device, the second manager component controlling the backup of the data to the at least one backup device.

11. The backup and retrieval system of claim 10 wherein the second management component executes on the first network device.

12. The backup and retrieval system of claim 10, the network computing system further comprising a second network device, wherein the second management component executes on the first network device.

13. The backup and retrieval system of claim 10, the network computing system further comprising a second group of network devices containing data, wherein the second management component controls a backup of the data contained on the second group of network devices.

14. The backup and retrieval system of claim 10, wherein the backup device is controllable directly from the second management component.

15. The backup and retrieval system of claim 10, wherein the backup device is controllable from the second management component via the first management component.

16. A backup and retrieval system for a network computing system, the network computing system comprising a first group of network devices containing data, the backup and retrieval system comprising:

at least one backup device executing backup functions for the data contained on the first group of network devices;

a first network device, communicatively coupled to the at least one backup device, controlling the backup of the data contained on the first group of network devices to the at least one backup device; and

a second network device, communicatively coupled to the first network device, the second network device the second manager component controlling the backup of the data to the at least one backup device.

17. The backup and retrieval system of claim 16, the network computing system further comprising a second group of network devices containing data, wherein the second network device controls a backup of the data contained on the second group of network devices.

18. The backup and retrieval system of claim 16, wherein the second network device directly controls the backup of the data to the at least one backup device.

19. The backup and retrieval system of claim 16, wherein the second network device controls the backup of the data to the at least one backup device via the first network device.

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